

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please amend the claims as indicated below:

1-62. (Cancelled).

63. (Currently amended) An immobilization and contacting medium for microorganisms, comprising apatite and a binder therefore, wherein the medium is in a rigid, porous form selected from a block ~~and~~ or a sheet, further wherein the medium is constructed and arranged to immobilize microorganisms on a surface of the pores of the medium while also being constructed and arranged to permit an external agent to contact the immobilized microorganisms.

64. (New) The immobilization and contacting medium of claim 63, further comprising one or more microorganisms disposed within the pores thereof.